



SUMMER '24

## Venture & Life-Skills Merger Finalized

### MISSION

Venture Community Services provides support to individuals facing diverse challenges through a compassionate and dedicated workforce using innovative practices that encourage independence, empowerment and

### CORE VALUES



Our merger with fellow provider [Life-Skills, Inc.](#) of Webster was effective July 1, 2024. This marks a strategic union with Venture continuing as the sole entity led by Mike Hyland as President & CEO of the combined organization. Life-Skills CEO Tom Amick will be retiring after 38 years of dedicated leadership.

Venture and Life-Skills have a long-standing relationship built on shared goals, values, and mission to provide high-quality support to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The combined organization will employ over 1,000 people, support close to 600 people with disabilities statewide, and have an annual operating budget of \$66 million.

“This merger represents an exciting time for Venture and Life-Skills,” said Hyland. “It allows us to grow together in forming an elite human services agency that is innovative, impactful, and successful.”

The decision to merge allows Venture to intentionally shape the future and adapt to trends of agency consolidation within the state. Joining forces also enables the combined organization to have a stronger voice with funders and ensure sustainability. Venture’s strategic agenda post-merger prioritizes the enhancement of existing programs, development of new initiatives and the cultivation of a robust workforce prepared to meet evolving client needs.



“Our board is so excited about the opportunity to create a single organization that is even stronger than its individual parts and will continue to provide consistently high levels of service to individuals in need,” said Donna Peters, President of Venture’s Board of Directors.



Our social media accounts are also a great way to stay up to date on all that is happening at Venture. Join us!





## EXCELLENCE AWARD

On May 21st, Alicia Randolph, Assistant Director of Operations was awarded the Venture Culture of Excellence Award at the 33rd Annual Legislative Breakfast



*Alicia's journey at Venture showcases the power of dedicated leadership in the human services industry. In her 23 years at Venture, she's risen from overnight staff to her current role as Assistant Director of Operations, leaving a lasting impact on the individuals we support at Venture.*

*Alicia embodies the essence of a career in human services- with her dedication, transformative leadership, and her commitment to improving lives. Alicia's legacy at Venture is defined not just by her titles, but by the profound impact she's had on individual's lives.*



## WHATS GOING ON AT VENTURE





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# FUNDRAISING EVENTS

## Charity Golf Classic—June 14th

We recently wrapped up our 26th annual Charity Golf Classic at Blissful Meadows Golf Course. This event offers us an opportunity to connect with our community partners, peer agencies and supporters and each year the proceeds from these events are reserved to provide funding for the things our programs and individuals need that state contracts and other funding doesn't offer. These funds can be used for adaptive equipment, vacations, day trips, assistive technology, recreational items and more.

Thank you to Kerrie and Kelsey and to all of our volunteers for their hard work in helping to make this event a success.

*Volunteers: Ericka Tefft-Davis, Wendy Mercier, Candice Diaz-Hunter, Ashley Perry, Melissa Miller, Kim Hilier, Leigh St. Hilaire, Katelyn Granger, Vanessa Adams, Maria Listenfelt, Tiffany Breau, Corrie Wetherbee, Kim Busha, Pam Sampson, Ashley Morway, Jess Sands, Brandon Morse*



**SAVE  
DATE**



Proceeds from our fundraising events support:

- Community Integration & Enrichment Fund
- Assistive Technology & Adaptive Equipment Fund
- Professional Development Fund
- Individual Client Needs Fund

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Steadfast Fence		

*Thank you!*

## COMMUNITY EVENTS



On April 25th, at our Uxbridge location, Venture hosted another successful community event tailored for children with autism. This time, we welcomed Jungle Jim from Cambridge, MA, who delighted a group of 20 children with his entertaining and interactive balloon magic performance.

In keeping with our commitment to inclusivity, this event was sensory-friendly, featuring soft music and a welcoming setting that allowed both children and adults to fully enjoy the 45-minute

balloon magic show. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with one participant remarking,

*"This was an amazing event! The kids couldn't stop talking about it all day. They're all excited to share it with their parents."*



## Woo Sox Partnership



If you are heading to Polar Park and need a break from the crowds, be sure to visit the Sensory Friendly Room sponsored by Venture! We encourage and invite guest to visit the Country Bank Fan Services Center to see the sensory features available.



We had a great time at the Polar Park Family Fest! We had sensory bins set up for kids to play with and they were a big hit. Looking forward to joining in more community events to provide a sensory friendly space for people attending.





## TEAM VENTURE SHOUT OUTS

*Our staff takes the time each month to thank their fellow team members for the work that they do. Following are the most recent shout outs of appreciation. If you have a 'shout out' for a Venture staff that you would like included, please email: [kmondor@venturecs.org](mailto:kmondor@venturecs.org).*

- ◆ Shout out to **Lloyd Dupre** for taking a person with intense behaviors swimming for the first time with us. Lloyd initiated the trip and they had a great time - Sandy Kemp
- ◆ **Jeffrey Just** and **Lisa Kuhne** for the hard work clearing and cleaning the back area for the individuals to enjoy. - Sandy Kemp
- ◆ **Marylyn Rizza** for picking up on a medical issue for an individual and alerting the nurses and management. - Sandy Kemp
- ◆ **Lacey Vallee** Thank you for bouncing around on the schedule and doing great working with whatever/whoever you are assigned. - Sandy Kemp
- ◆ **Robin Potter** for all the SNAs put into ICentrix.- Sandy Kemp
- ◆ Shout out to **Janessa Morales** for beautifying the participants in the SDH- The haircuts, washes, and blow-dry have added to everyone's self esteem! - Sandy Kemp
- ◆ **Sheri Julian** with the help with SDHs new schedule- Sandy Kemp
- ◆ **Tiffany Gerrard Howland** AWESOME JOB WITH THE SCANNING! - Sandy Kemp
- ◆ To the **CCHP team**: thanks for your support with all of the new changes and for being available to connect with my members for the transfer of cases. Grateful to have such a great team to work with. Looking forward to providing assistance with the outreach process. - Maria Listenfelt
- ◆ Thank you **Kendra, Laurie R and Vanessa** for all your support and help with OQE prep for the Advancement Center. - Francesca
- ◆ **Kelly**, Thank you for being on top of everything at Prospect Street- Francesca
- ◆ **Julie** you bring such great energy to work each and everyday! We appreciate you. - Francesca
- ◆ **Jess**, Thank you for all your efforts in getting all individuals Human Rights Trained. - Francesca
- ◆ **John**, Thank you for being flexible and understanding. - Francesca
- ◆ **Jess, John, Julie** Thank you for all your hard work.- Francesca



### *Shout outs to Sturbridge Day Hab:*

- ◆ Thank you to **Tiffany Gerrard** for scanning all the old records.—Erin Even
- ◆ **Sheri Julian**, thank you for inputting the old records to the F drive.
- ◆ **Sandy Kemp** we appreciate you for getting all the profiles into Icentrix!
- ◆ **Robin Potter**, thank you so much for getting all the assessments completed in Icentrix
- ◆ **Elish Rivera Soto, Tiffany Gerrard, Sarah Gauthier, Lacy Vallee, Karen Igoe, Nikisha Garcia** thank you all for showing up every single day to help support our individuals in the SDH. Your hard work does not go unnoticed, great team work!
- ◆ Shout out to **IT** for working hard to resolve our internet and phone issues.
- ◆ Way to go **HR**, for hiring some really great staff for SDH!
- ◆ Thank you, **Leominster Day Hab Staff**, for making our 1<sup>st</sup> cookout of the year successful. We appreciate your hard work and everything you do for Individuals we support.—Justin Mapinduzi
- ◆ Thank you, **Kiara** for leading by example the great team of Leominster Day Hab.—Justin Mapinduzi
- ◆ A warm welcome to **Melanie Falck, RN** for your dedication. It's a pleasure working with you as our Nurse.—Justin Mapinduzi
- ◆ Thank you to **Kelsey Mondor** for holding down the fort and making sure everything was set up perfectly for the golf event—Kerrie.
- ◆ **Justin, Erin, & Jason** thank you for being troopers and completing both MassHealth pilots. You all did a great job and provided valuable feedback. We are one step ahead because of it. Great job team!- Vanessa Adams
- ◆ **Fran, Jess, Julie, John & Kelly** thank you for pitching in and completing everything necessary for the CBDS audit. Fran great job presenting the Advancement Center and all that we offer. Amazing job team!- Vanessa
- ◆ **Wendy** congrats on CCHP Employee of the Month, well deserved. Go CCHP!! Our venture CCHP staff have been top performers several times now.—Vanessa

## TEAM VENTURE SHOUT OUTS

*Shout outs from Pam Sampson:*

- ◆ Congratulations and thanks for **Francesca Rafferty, Vanessa Adams and Laurie Reynolds** on a very successful mid-cycle review for the Advancement Center program. You ladies killed it...as expected!
- ◆ Thanks to **Alicia, Cathy and Eric** for all of their excellent work in developing a residential programs transition plan to will bring Life Skills house managers and program coordinators quickly up to speed when we merge the agencies.
- ◆ Thanks to **Jenn Parker, James Konie, Allie King, Brenda Bishko, and Kinston Koiwu** for partnering with the program coordinators from Life Skills to help them orient to Venture procedures. On top of everything else you all have to do, your kindness in helping your new colleagues is wonderful!
- ◆ Thanks to **Greg Golden** for pinch hitting, your assistance has been much appreciated!
- ◆ A HUGE shout out to **James Konie** for his ongoing house manager training sessions! We appreciate the initiative you've shown in really taking this project on.
- ◆ Congratulations to **Alicia Randolph** on being recognized by and receiving a commendation from the Massachusetts House for her outstanding service at Venture. This is well deserved.
- ◆ Thank you thank you thank you thank you and congratulations to the **Hope Street team** – you survived JP and proved yourselves to be dedicated employees again. Thanks for hanging in there, especially when there seemed to be no end in sight.
- ◆ Shout out to **John, Jess, Julie and Fran at the Advancement Center** (with the guidance of **Vanessa**, too!). They've done an excellent job increasing the census and providing some real quality excellent programming. The people receiving supports are engaged and happy to be at Venture. It's really nice to see!
- ◆ Kudos to **SDH individuals and staff** for an gorgeous outdoor garden area. Looks terrific!
- ◆ Shout out to **Jeff from SDH**. Your work with QA has been exemplary and really improved his quality of life
- ◆ Congratulations to **Maria Listenfelt** on her new role as Outreach Specialist for CCHP. Maria will work with her LTSS colleagues to engage new clients into the Community Partnership.
- ◆ **Ashley Beaupre-Aldrich**—Continues to build excellent relationships with her CCHP members. I spoke with one of her members while Ashley was on leave and this woman could not say enough positive things about Ashley. The member told me how much Ashley cares about her and her needs, how Ashley has gone above and beyond in finding resources for her, and she told me how lucky we are to have Ashley working for us! - Kevin Fijol
- ◆ **Maria Listenfelt**- Maria has done an awesome job of transitioning her members to other Venture/CCHP Care Coordinators as she moves into her Outreach role with Venture/CCHP. Maria has clearly built great relationships as a Care Coordinator as many of Maria's members expressed sadness that they won't be working directly with Maria going forward and gratitude for all Maria has done for each of them.- Kevin Fijol
- ◆ **Hunter Malone**- Thank you for working so closely with Maria as her members are transitioned to your caseload, meeting some of them in person with Maria is a great way to build rapport. Also, great job coordinating with ACOs and other care team members to determine current status of members as well as next steps! - Kevin Fijol
- ◆ **Ariana Templeton**- Thank you for working so closely with Maria on the members she is transferring to you. Your meeting many of them in person with Maria is outstanding in building relationships with these members. Also, I want to thank you for your dedication and perseverance. Your ability to work through difficult situations is a testament to you as a person and as a Venture employee. Nothing can throw you off course. - Kevin Fijol
- ◆ Shout out to **Kelsey Mondor** for doing such an amazing job with our social media accounts. It is really making a difference in our community engagement. - Kerrie
- ◆ Thank you to **Ricky & Jelani & Jen** for transporting all of our golf event stuff.—Kerrie
- ◆ Thank you to **Laurie Reynolds** for helping to provide updated data on the number of people we now support.—Kerrie
- ◆ Huge thanks to **Corrie Wetherbee** the event volunteer extraordinaire! You are always so helpful at all of our events and know exactly what to do.—Kerrie
- ◆ **Mackenzie** thank you so much for taking on all the shared living cases effortlessly and training Devin so thoroughly. Your knowledge and specialty show keep it up. - Vanessa
- ◆ **Devin** welcome to the shared living team. You are catching on quickly and doing an amazing job, such a great addition!- Vanessa
- ◆ **Diana, Ashley and Damien** thank you for your endless support and guidance, truly appreciated. - Vanessa